



# DISTRACTED DRIVING

## *What You Can do to Keep You & Your Family Safe*

Distracted driving is the number one cause of car crashes. Practically everyone knows the dangers of distracted driving, but that hasn't done much to dissuade drivers from texting or talking on the phone while behind the wheel. Everyone seems to know it's dangerous, but few people seem to think it's dangerous when they do it.

A National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) survey found that 94% of drivers support laws banning texting while driving, but 14% of respondents admitted to reading texts or emails while driving. A Harris Poll showed that nearly half of drivers under 35 who own cell phones text while driving.

### COMMIT TO SAFE DRIVING

Below are some safe driving strategies that will help ensure the safety of your passengers as well as others on the road:

#### **Make calls and send texts before you start the car.**

Make that call to ask your spouse a question before you're on the road. Text your friend that vital piece of gossip, then put away the phone.

#### **Think about what you need before you leave.**

For instance, program your GPS at the outset, rather than fiddling with it during the drive. Or make sure you have your wallet or purse, so you're not looking for it in the car while you drive.

**Select a designated driver.** The idea of a designated driver has caught on for drunk driving, and choosing a substitute can be just as useful for distracted driving. Select a friend to be your designated texter while you're behind the wheel.

#### **Stow your phone somewhere you can't peek at it.**

Try putting it in the glove compartment (lock it if you must) or inside a purse in the back seat.

**Don't multi-task at stop lights.** It's easy to justify sneaking in a look at your Facebook notifications or adding a swipe of mascara when you're temporarily stopped, but the truth is you should still be thinking about the road even when you're not in motion.

**Silence notifications that tempt you to check your phone.**

**Investigate apps that will help boost your willpower.** There are several types of apps on the market, some of them free, that allow you to block incoming messages or send automatic responses to let your friends know you're driving.

**Think it through.** Consider whether it's worth risking your safety—and that of others in your car and on the road—to read a text while driving. Then wait until you've reached your destination.

**Stop driving if it's urgent.** If you absolutely cannot wait, pull over when you can do so safely. Swerving to the side of a busy highway is never a good option, of course. If you are driving on a road with safe places to pull over, use them to stop and text.

#### KEEPING TEENS FOCUSED & SAFE WHILE DRIVING

- » Teens aren't experienced drivers. They're still developing good judgment behind the wheel. For teens, car crashes are the leading cause of death.
- » How can parents keep a teen driver safe?
- » Be a good example. Be your teen's role model for good driving. Don't send texts or take pictures while you're driving.
- » Set the rules for your teen driver. As a parent, it's your role to set the rules. Don't allow your teen to use a cell phone while driving.
- » Ride along with your teen when you can.
- » Limit their driving with other teens. Having other passengers, especially teens, in the car can be dangerously distracting.

